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An Update from Secretary Kawamura

URGENT TIME-SENSITIVE INFORMATION
200-Year Vision for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

9/26/06

Last year the Governor signed [AB 1200](#), which directed the departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game to prepare a 200-year vision and strategic plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta is the heart of California's water system, providing water to four million acres of agricultural land and more than 20 million Californians. It is also a fragile and threatened ecosystem, supporting significant populations of waterfowl and fish. Significant to CDFA's mission, the Delta also supports a major component of California's agricultural industry both in and south of the Delta. The Delta Vision and strategic plan are to serve as an umbrella planning document under which existing and future federal, state and local planning is influenced and coordinated. Two important moving parts under the Vision are the Delta Risk Management Study (DRMS) and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

The [Bay-Delta Conservation Planning Agreement](#) and the [Delta Risk Management Study \(DRMS\)](#) are now available for public review. Comments on either paper are due by Monday, October 2, 2006, a very short turnaround. If you have any comments about either document, you may contact CDFA Environmental Scientist [Ken Trott](#) by email or phone (916) 651-9445.

DRMS has developed fourteen [Initial Technical Framework papers](#) to set forth the assumptions and knowledge about the Delta levees, the risks to the levees and the consequences of their failure. These papers will provide the framework and basis for DRMS as it moves forward in its assessment, analysis and recommendations. They address a wide range of topics from subsidence to economic consequences. DRMS will be a major driver of the Delta Vision and strategic plan. The DRMS will assess major risks to Delta levees, evaluate consequences of their failure and develop recommendations for action.



Agriculture in the Delta and south of the Delta, including the San Joaquin Valley, depends on these levees to get fresh water to the Delta pumps and the state and federal water project contractors. The [Department of Water Resources](#) (DWR) has asked for public review and comment on these papers for the accuracy and completeness of their assumptions and information. Agriculture needs to make sure these papers address the realities of farming in and south of the Delta. **I encourage you to go to the [DWR website](#), review the pertinent papers and benefit DWR with your knowledge and expertise. You may email your comments to [Ralph Svetich](#), DWR, DRMS Project Manager.**

The other major activity that falls under the Delta Vision and strategic plan is the development of a conservation plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts. The dramatic decline of listed pelagic fish in the Delta in recent years threatens the

continued pumping of water from the Delta for farmers and cities in and south of the Delta, unless a legally binding conservation plan for the statutory Delta is developed and implemented. The plan or plans could affect agriculture not only in the Delta, but both north and south of the Delta.

A steering committee, facilitated by the California Resources Agency and including key wildlife and water agencies, state and federal water project contractors and select environmental organizations, has drafted a planning agreement. The planning agreement sets forth planning goals, conservation objectives, the geographic scope of the conservation plan, species and habitat to be covered, planning process and commitments, public participation and the inclusion of independent scientific review.

The [Bay-Delta Conservation Planning Agreement](#) is now available for public review and comment. Again, this conservation plan is critical to the continued operation of California's water system on which much of this state's highest value agricultural lands depend. **I encourage you to review this planning agreement, inform yourselves about this planning effort and, if necessary, provide feedback to the steering committee.** The document can be viewed online at the [Department of Fish and Game website](#) or by calling (916) 653-8341 to order a print copy. Comments should be sent to Scott Cantrell, CA Department of Fish and Game- Habitat Conservation Division, 1416 Ninth Street, Room 1342-C, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Scientists and policymakers have concluded that the Delta is under siege and is not sustainable under current management. The Delta is threatened from encroaching urbanization, identified seismic risks, sea level rise, climate change, invasive and exotic plant and animal species and island subsidence. The monumental tasks facing those who will be developing the Delta Vision mandated by [Assembly Bill 1200](#) is to confront those threats head-on and to develop a strategy for a sustainable future Delta.

As always, thank you for your support. Feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns.



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Red Pepper Harvest, Gilroy area, Santa Clara County. Photo: E. Williams / CDFA